(b) whether Government have framed guidelines so as to ensure that Government agencies pay a fair compension to victims; if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) On the recommendation of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Science and Technology, Environment and Forests, Government has decided to delete Clause 4 which grants exemption to the Government agencies from the purview of the National Environment Tribunal Bill, 1992.

(b) Since government agencies are to be treated on par with private companies with respect to the provisions of the National Environment Tribunal Bill, 1992, there is no necessity for a separate set of guidelines in this regard.

Trade of "Shahtoosh" Wool

3547. SHRI RAJUBHAI A. PARMAR: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have set up a Committee to inquire into the procurement and trade of the precious Shahtoosh Wool as it has become a matter of controversy with Chinese authorities, demanding complete ban on sale and trade of items made of "Shahtoosh";

(b) if so, the precise circumstances leading thereto and the controversy with China; and

(c) the terms of reference of the Committee?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) and (b) A team, consisting of officials from the Forest Department of Jammu & Kashmir, Scientist from the Wildlife Institute of India and representatives of the Kashmir Handicrafts Traders Welfare Association has been asked to visit the Ladakh area in Jammu and Kashmir to look into the various issues of the Shahtoosh trade.

Shahtoosh is the underwool obtained from the Tibetan antelope. There are two views on the method of procurement of this wool. According to one view the procurement of Shahtoosh involves killing of the Tibetan antelope. The other view is that it does not involve killing of the animal as the wool is shed by the animal and is collected from the area. The Chinese authorities have voiced their concern at killing of the antelope for Shahtoosh in their country at international meetings and have sought support of India and Nepal. This species is listed in Appendix I of CITES and thus there is a ban on its international trade. The CITES Secretariat have also brought this issue to the notice of the Govt. of India for taking necessary action under the convention and national laws.

(c) The joint team will attempt to address the issues relating to—

(i) alleged killings of the animal

(ii) exact species from which the wool is being obtained

(iii) ascertaining the method of collection of the wool.

(iv) identification of the illegal trade route if any.

Provision for checking Pollution

3548. SHRI PARMESHWAR KUMAR AGARWALLA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) what are the provisions to check pollution of various types like pollution of air, water, sound etc. in our country; and

(b) what is the impact on environment of the coal of 45 per cent above ash being used in our power houses?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) The measures adopted to check air and water pollution include the following:

(i) Effluent and emission standards have been prescribed.

(ii) Environmental guidelines have been evolved for siting and operation of industries.

(iii) Industries have been asked to comply with consent requirements of the State Pollution Control Boards.

(iv) Industries have been directed to install necessary polittion control equipment on a time bound basis and legal action is taken against the defaulting units.

(v) Notification of ambient air quality standards has been issued.

(vi) Central Pollution Control Boards regularly monitors the water quality of Yamuna and of the ground water in Delhi and State Pollution Control Boards have been requested to do the same in the various rivers in the States.

(vii) Government of India has notified noise standards for industrial, commercial and residential areas and silence zones.

(viii) Codes of practice has been evolved for operation of various equipments to ensure that noise levels are maintained within the prescribed limits.

(xi) Unleaded petrol have been introduced in four metropolitan cities in the country with effect from 1st April, 1995.

(b) Use of coal with a high ash content and improper treatment of emisions and effluent from power plants results in the deterioration of ambient air quality soil degradation and in some cases water pollution.

"Decline in teak stocks"

3549. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state :

(a) whether any particular attention has been paid by the Government of India to the rapidly declining teak stocks in Palavaram Range and Kannapuram Range in West Godavari District;

(b) whether any report has been called from the Government of Andhra Pradesh on the status of teak forests in above two ranges; and

(c) what are the details of measures proposed to ensure greater protection to existing teak plantations in such area?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH) : (a) to (c). Information is being collected and would be placed on the Table of the House.

Functioning of State Pollution Control Boards"

3550. SHRI S. S. AHLUWALIA : Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to various criticism, particularly by the entrepreneurs, about the functioning of the pollution Control Boards in various States;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the details of steps, if any, taken to ensure scrutiny of the functioning of Pollution Control Boards in States, particularly with a view to eliminate scope of harassment of the entrepreneurs; and